

# Fuzzy Wuzzy

| care guide |

## GUINEA PIGS

- Guinea pigs are not really pigs & are not from Guinea!
- They are native to the Andes Mountains of South America.
- Guinea pigs have been domesticated for centuries. They love to run.
- Guinea pigs live 4 to 6+ years. Adults weigh 1.5 - 2.5 lb.
- The animals can even purr.
- All pigs have bald patches behind their ears.
- Their front teeth and molars grow continuously.
- Males are boars, females are sows, and babies are pups.
- Guinea pigs have 4 toes on their front feet, 3 toes on their hind feet.
- The term for bucking and throwing themselves into the air when happy is "popcorning".



### Diet

Guinea pigs are primarily fed a pelleted diet fortified with vitamin C. They are unique in that they are the only mammal other than primates that do not metabolize Vitamin C from sunshine. Their diet should also be supplemented with a daily multi-vitamin, fresh vegetables and timothy hay. Provide a constant supply of fresh water in a water bottle.

### Housing

Guinea pigs can be kept in larger cages or aquariums. A screen top isn't really necessary as Guinea pigs don't jump or climb; the top is more to keep other household pets from hurting the pig. A 1" to 2" layer of bedding should cover the bottom. Do not use cedar or pine shavings which contain aromatic oils and can lead to respiratory problems. A covered hiding space/den provides a sense of security and a favorite place to sleep. Locate the cage in a draft-free, 65-75°F area close to household activities, out of direct sunlight.

### Handling & Care

Guinea pigs are social animals. They do well when kept in pairs or groups that have been raised together. The pair doesn't necessarily have to be a mated pair, as two males get along well together, as do two females. Guinea pigs are easy to handle. Gently scoop the animal into the palm of your hand, while placing your other hand over the animal's back and lift.

### Grooming

Comb daily to remove loose hair and reduce shedding. Clip nails monthly. An occasional bath with a shampoo formulated especially for kittens will help avoid drying their skin. Use a shallow bowl of water and dry thoroughly before returning them to their home.

### Health

A sick pet can go downhill quickly. Weigh weekly and record to alert you of any weight loss, often the first sign of any illness. Contact your veterinarian if you notice weight loss or any of these symptoms:

- Refusal to eat or drink
- Overgrown teeth
- Labored breathing, wheezing, sneezing
- Diarrhea or blood in urine
- Dull and/or receding eyes
- Inactive / Lethargic
- Limping / Loss of balance
- Head tilt
- Excessive hair loss / scratching
- Rough hair coat

### GUINEA PIG CHECKLIST

- Guinea Pig Pellets, Hay
- Heavy Feed Dish
- Water Bottle
- Cage with Solid Bottom
- Bedding
- Multi-Vitamin Supplement
- Treats
- Toys
- Hiding Place
- Comb & Nail Clipper
- Small Transport Carrier
- Guinea Pig Book



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